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Identifying Criteria for Firefighter Performance Evaluation

Executive Leadership

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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Abstract

The problem was that the Wichita Fire Department utilized a personnel performance appraisal form that has not changed in nearly 20 years and does not adequately reflect firefighter job responsibilities for the position of firefighter. The purpose of this research is identify job-related criteria and then develop an updated and revised Firefighter Performance Appraisal Form that could be used by supervisors. Using the action research methodology, this research project answered five research questions: How is the current Wichita Fire Department firefighter performance appraisal perceived by Wichita Fire Department company officers? How do Wichita Fire Department firefighters perceive the current performance appraisal? What if any, are the federal, state, and local requirements for a municipal employee performance evaluation program? What are the necessary components of an effective employee performance evaluation? What criteria or elements of the firefighter job description do Wichita Fire Department company officers feel need to be included in a revised firefighter performance appraisal form? The procedures used by the author included a literature review, personal interviews, and three separate internal questionnaires of Wichita Fire Department company officers and firefighters regarding current employee performance appraisal issues. Results indicated that there was a need for a firefighter performance appraisal form that should include more job-related elements to be evaluated. The research identified additional criteria that should be included in a revised firefighter performance appraisal form for the Wichita Fire Department. The procedures used by the author included a literature review, personal interviews, and three separate internal questionnaires of WFD company officers and firefighters regarding current employee performance appraisal issues. The results indicated that WFD personnel feel that the present employee performance appraisal form is lacking in a number of areas when it comes to

evaluating firefighter performance. Results also indicated that there was a need for more job-related elements to be included on a revised performance appraisal form. The additional criteria would help formalize and refine the existing employee evaluation process. Recommendations included seeking stakeholder input research, development and implementation of identified elements into a revised performance appraisal form, obtaining buy in from Human Resource Department to adopt revised form, training of all WFD supervisors in use of new form, and educating employees in the objectives and goals of employee performance appraisals.

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Introduction

It could be argued that one of the most important functions of a supervisor is that of efficient and effective development of his or her subordinates. This is very important when the organization is in fact one that encompasses both employee and public safety when performing its tasks, such as that of the fire service. Yet despite its importance, this function can many times in fact be limited by the organization itself without the organization even realizing it. Areas such as insufficient supervisor training, inadequate performance evaluation, or outdated appraisal instruments could limit the supervisor's ability to successfully develop the subordinate not only as an employee but also effect the organization's ability to successfully fulfill its intended goals and objectives.

The task of performing a firefighter's performance appraisal in the Wichita Fire Department (WFD) is the responsibility of the firefighter's assigned company officer. The problem is that the current WFD firefighter employee performance appraisal form does not adequately reflect specific firefighter job responsibilities for the position of firefighter. This could limit a supervisor's ability to successfully develop the employee to meet the organization's goals but more importantly could identify substandard firefighter performance which could lead to undue risk to the employee, to fellow employees, and to the citizens of Wichita.

The purpose of this research is to identify specific job-related criteria and then develop an updated and revised Firefighter Employee Appraisal Form to be used by WFD supervisors. Using action research methodology, this applied research project will answer five research questions: How is the current Wichita Fire Department firefighter performance appraisal perceived by WFD company officers? How do WFD firefighters perceive the current

performance appraisal? What if any, are the federal, state, and local requirements for a municipal employee performance evaluation program? What are the necessary components of an effective employee performance evaluation? What criteria or elements of the firefighter job description do WFD company officers feel need to be included in a revised performance appraisal form?

Background and Significance

Wichita is located at the junction of the Arkansas River and Little Arkansas River in south central Kansas. Incorporated as a village in 1870 and later as a city in 1886, Wichita was established as the principal city in the region.

The Wichita Fire Department (WFD) is currently the largest career fire department in the state of Kansas. The department was formally established in 1872 and became a paid career fire department in 1886. The organization is comprised of three divisions consisting of the Support Services Division, Fire Prevention Division, and Fire Operations Division. The WFD currently consists of approximately 426 commissioned personnel and operates out of 22 fire stations. The department serves a population of approximately 352,000 citizens and is responsible for 164 square miles of response area.

The WFD has evolved into an all inclusive fire department that performs technical rescues, hazardous material mitigation, fire suppression, and first responder emergency medical services to the citizens of Wichita. The department also provides fire prevention services such as arson investigation, public education, prevention and fire inspections that all operate under the direction of the WFD Fire Marshal. The Wichita Fire Department responded to over 48,000 alarms in 2008 with over 31,000 of those being medical related alarms. The WFD will operate on approximately a 36 million dollar budget in 2008-2009. Wichita retains an ISO rating of 3 (City of Wichita, 2007). The department uses a 24/48 hour work schedule which is divided into A-Shift, B-Shift, and C-Shift. Each shift has one Shift Commander, three Battalion Chiefs, approximately 40 Fire Captains and Fire Lieutenants and approximately 75-80 Firefighters assigned daily.

In any given year, WFD company officers complete and record over 340 performance appraisals on their assigned firefighters. These performance appraisals could be used as a snapshot of how well every WFD firefighter is performing his or her job, but more importantly, how well the organization as a whole is fulfilling its mission. A performance appraisal is currently completed on every firefighter annually by his or her immediate supervisor. In this case it is the assigned firefighter's Fire Captain or Fire Lieutenant who actually completes the performance appraisal.

The performance appraisal form currently being used by the WFD for the position of firefighter has not changed in over 20 years. In fact, the form is a generic, non-specific job description form that is also used by the City of Wichita Water Department, Public Works Department, Transit Department, Park Department and the Wichita Police Department. The current performance appraisal is a forced answer rating type that allows the supervisor to rate the employee in several different areas. The supervisor has a choice of ratings for the employee consisting of: Outstanding, Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Below Expectations, and Unsatisfactory. The supervisor rates the employee in the following areas: Flexibility, Quality of Work, Initiative, Dependability, Job Knowledge, Quantity of Work, Interpersonal and Customer Service Skills, Work Habits, and Judgement. Based from the totality of ratings in each of these areas, a final Overall rating is given to the employee using the aforementioned choices.

By establishing a more specific method of measuring and documenting job skills, work habits, abilities, deficiencies, and strengths of WFD firefighters, this could enable WFD firefighters to contribute more effectively to the success of the organization and develop individually as an employee. By not using a more job specific type of performance appraisal for these past 20 years, may in itself, have possibly limited organizational and individual firefighter

development by not accurately measuring important job criteria. The organizational implications of this research can help shape the future of the WFD internally. By revising and updating a method of measuring job performance, work habits, and areas of improvement, WFD firefighters may be able to respond more effectively to the organization's demands. For all of these reasons, the WFD should work to develop and adopt a more specific form for the annual firefighter performance appraisal.

This research is directly related to the United States Fire Administration's (USFA) fifth operational goal which is to lead the Nation's fire and emergency services by establishing and sustaining the USFA as a dynamic organization. Specifically Objective 5.1, which is to maintain a positive work environment to ensure the organization's well-being and productivity, and Objective 5.2, which states "to continuously improve our business systems and processes" (FEMA, 2005). There is no doubt that an effective and accurate employee performance appraisal ensures continuation of an organization's productivity as it identifies both strengths and weaknesses of its employees. The fire service also must continue to look towards proven and established business models and processes that foster continued improvement of both the employee and the organization.

This research also relates to Unit five of the Executive Leadership (EL) course of the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) which deals with the issues of managing multiple roles from a management point of view. Areas such as mentoring, job enrichment and training all have serious organizational implications if not performed adequately. Also in Unit two, of the EL course involves the use of feedback located in the EL author's Personal Development Plan as a tool for personal and professional development relates to this research in that feedback from a supervisor can be a key and important element in the employee appraisal process (FEMA, 2005).

The WFD as an organization is in a unique position in that for the first time since its charter as a professional fire department, in the past four years it has hired over 90 new firefighters and is experiencing unprecedented growth due to station additions and retirements. The future impact of this research on the WFD could be enormous due to the number of firefighters it will directly impact. A revised performance appraisal form can lead to a better trained, more effective, and better developed workforce along with the delivery of service to the citizens of Wichita at the highest possible level.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to summarize what has been previously published on the relevance of employee performance appraisals to gain a comprehensive understanding of this subject. The literature review also assisted in answering two of the research questions. The author reviewed all material to narrow the scope of the findings to the research problem and to only that which would meet the intent of this research. The WFD currently has a performance appraisal form and system, therefore, no need exists for a new or different appraisal type, but rather just an updated and revised performance appraisal form, allowing supervisors and employees a more detailed evaluation of the employee's work performance. This review examined national and local government documents, professional trade publications, books, the internet and prior research papers on the subject of employee performance appraisals. The author personally performed this literature review at the National Emergency Training Center's Learning Resource Center located in Emmittsburg, Maryland, the Wichita State University's Ablah Library, the City of Wichita's Human Resource library, and the Wichita Fire Department's Training Division library located in Wichita, Kansas.

A personal interview with WFD Deputy Chief of Operations Dan L. McClure (Appendix A) was conducted by the author on June 30, 2009. Chief McClure was selected due to his 30 years of service with the Fire Department and his vast experience and knowledge of the WFD firefighter performance appraisal form and system used by the City of Wichita.

Personal interviews with Lisa White (Appendix B) and Sarah Gilbert (Appendix C), of the City of Wichita Human Resources Department were conducted by the author on July 24, 2009. Ms. Gilbert was selected due to her position as Human Resources Director and her 32

years of Human Resource experience with the City of Wichita, while Ms. White was selected due to her being the Human Resource Department's assigned personnel technician to the fire department along with her knowledge of employee performance appraisals.

Employee performance appraisals can, at the same time, be one of the least liked supervisor responsibilities and one of the most important supervisor responsibilities conducted by company officers. Employee performance appraisals are an important tool for both the firefighter and the organization. While the types and styles of performance appraisals vary with each and every organization, the purpose and benefits remain fairly constant. Compton (2002) finds that in any organization, one of management's major duties and responsibilities is the evaluation of its employees. This is usually done to guide overall performance of the organization.

Edwards (2005) defines performance appraisals as the formal, systematic assessment of how well employees are performing their jobs in relation to established standards and the communication of that assessment to the employee and the organization and maintains that fire service organizations generally use the performance appraisal for two basic reasons: to measure performance for salary advancements and to further develop the organization's employees. In the Fire Chief's Handbook, Brennan (1995) describes the performance appraisal system as the means of regularly determining if an employee is meeting the needs of the department and the professional standards of the job while Braithwaite (2002) simply defines the performance appraisal as the formal and systematic measurement of job performance. According to Arthur (2008) the primary objective of a performance appraisal is to ensure the maximum utilization of an employee's skills, knowledge and abilities. Secondary performance appraisal objectives include enhancing employer-employee relations and motivating employees to perform key tasks

more effectively. Guerra-Lopez (2008) believes that the objective of a performance appraisal should be to provide feedback to the employee as part of a continual improvement process. The ultimate goal of any performance appraisal is to develop firefighters who understand and demonstrate the competence needed to perform their duties now and in the future. Fire Departments should begin to view performance evaluations or appraisals as a valuable tool to facilitate organizational growth and employee's individual growth also.

The International City Management Association (ICMA) lists goals of an effective performance appraisal include: informing employees how they are doing, documenting employee performance, evaluate employee's strengths and weaknesses, and providing information to the employee to assist the employee in professional development. The ICMA also includes twelve characteristics of an effective performance appraisal:

1. The appraisal should be simple and easy to administer.
2. The Human Resources Department should be able to keep track of the appraisal easily.
3. The performance appraisal form should be easy to complete by supervisors.
4. The evaluation criteria should be concrete, specific, controllable and measureable.
5. Employees should have access to the standards being measured and the appraisal form itself well in advance of their proposal.
6. Employees should be given an opportunity to comment on the performance appraisal.
7. The performance appraisal should be designed to fit the needs of the organization.
8. Job descriptions used in the performance appraisal process should be updated and kept recent.
9. Supervisors should be properly trained on how to evaluate employees.

10. Performance standards or goals should be communicated to the employee before the performance appraisal.
11. Performance appraisal should focus on specific job-related behaviors and not traits, abilities or personal characteristics.
12. The performance instrument or form should be developed from a systematic analysis of individual jobs. (ICMA, 1997).

From the organization's perspective an important reason for performing employee performance appraisals is to establish and maintain accountability. Many times employee performance appraisals can benefit the organization by reducing substandard performance while at the same time identifying specific organizational training needs. Employee's performance appraisals, if properly done, can in fact strengthen an organization by preparing and developing the personnel to continue organization's mission and purpose. The employees make up the sum total of the organization. The appraisal can often build stronger working relationships between employees and supervisors due to the communication necessary to perform a performance appraisal if done correctly. A primary goal of the employee performance appraisal is to improve the quality of work and the individual employee involved with that work. It is critical in the fire service that the safety of employees along with the quality of service delivered is continues to be monitored, in order to maintain the highest possible standards (Edwards, 2005). The performance appraisal provides relevant, reliable, and valid data to help the organization make justifiable decisions about how to get closer to meeting the organizational goals. Performance appraisals compare results with expectations and can identify barriers to unexpected employee performance (Smith). They can produce action plans for improving employee performance, which in turn fulfills the organization's objectives. However it is important that the organization

has communicated these goals and objectives to the employee and the performance appraisal is an excellent tool for this purpose (Guerra-Lopez, 2008).

The performance appraisal also provides the organization with decision-making information for its human resource needs. However, when the performance appraisal is not based on objective criteria but rather subjective criteria, the firefighter starts to recognize the connection and begins performing for the evaluator, thus the firefighter ceases to perform for the benefit of the organization (Martinette, 2005). The performance appraisal also provides the organization with future documentation for inquiries on such issues as promotional policies, disciplinary actions, or individual claims of discrimination. If an evaluation process is going to be done consistently, then the use of an accurate and simple checklist or form is critical and an essential component in performing an effective firefighter evaluation (Buckman).

A performance appraisal is important to an employee's professional development with the goal of the appraisal being to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual firefighter states Crawford (2003). This is a valuable tool to both the employee and the department in that it gives the employee a better understanding of their role within the organization (Bogard, 2005). A better understanding of the employee is gained and his or her supervisor can then assist the employee with establishing goals for the employee's continued professional development and any needed career counseling (Neely, 2002). Performance appraisals can isolate atypical employee behavior and performance while also identifying marginal performers and give those employees greater guidance and direction (Arthur, 2008). Employees must be included in the entire performance appraisal process in order for it to be effective. They should be involved with and participate in all facets including the writing of job descriptions and identifying necessary goals and standards for the appraisal process. It has been

determined that personnel who are intimately involved with the process tend to trust the appraisal and are more committed to their own professional development (Delpo, 2005).

Performance appraisals that tend to be the most effective are those that utilize communication between employee and supervisor for the purpose of reviewing past performance and to identify ways to improve future performance. Two-way communication on goals and performance is essential for effective results. Timely performance feedback from supervisor to the employee is essential (Bacal, 2004). According to Grote (2004) positive feedback on performance from a supervisor gives the employee a sense of achievement, recognition, and accomplishment thus promoting continued desired behavior and job performance by the employee. Employees are constantly seeking information on how they are doing. Employees want to know from their employers where they stand. Honest and consistent feedback about individual job performance helps the employee know that their performance is being done well, what needs to be changed or corrected, and any results or consequences of his or her performance. Performance appraisals can often provide formal recognition for employee accomplishments and job performance. Feedback to employees will certainly improve efficiency to both the organization and employee while allowing both to prosper (Stowell, 2004).

An employee appraisal should focus on some primary job performance standards (Graner, 2006). After all there has to be some form of measurement device in place in order to properly and accurately measure employee performance. Falcone (2007) insists that a performance appraisal should be defined as two distinct parts, the Job Description and the Performance/Work Habit Review. The Job Description allows for the company officer performing the appraisal and the firefighter being evaluated are measuring the same tasks and responsibilities to the same degree. The Performance/Work habits review should cover those

qualities that the company officer believes pertain to the firefighter and his or her job. A job description can often solve minor problems that tend to be misunderstandings over what is actually expected of the employee. A productive employee performance appraisal should at least include some basic aspects of the employee's job description (Falcone, 2007). The employee performance appraisal should have established standards for acceptable behavior, duties for the position, and goals to be reached.

You cannot determine whether an employee is performing well without something tangible against which to measure his or her performance. The employee performance appraisal should clearly identify the specific tasks that an employee is expected to perform. This is best accomplished in the form of a job description. Job descriptions serve two primary purposes: to identify the essential functions of the job and to clarify what the employee is expected to accomplish. Job descriptions form the groundwork for an informal agreement between an employer and employee as to the expected job performance results. For greatest accuracy and efficiency, supervisors can simply reference the employee's job description for each category on the employee performance appraisal form. Performance appraisal forms are maximally effective when they are used to highlight an employee's performance in relation to the responsibilities as identified in the job description (Arthur, 2008). The International Personnel Management Association (IPMA, 2002) identifies key to having an effective employee performance appraisal in place is to have realistic job performance standards that can be evaluated by supervisors objectively.

Bernardin and Beatty (1984) insist legally sound employee performance appraisals are based on performance standards that reflect actual job requirements and that the standards should also reflect specific dimensions of actual job performance. One of the most common sources for

specific job accountabilities is an individual's job description as provided from his or her employer.

Neal (2001) goes as far to say that employees want to be measured against objective standards when it comes to being evaluated. If employees are rewarded and recognized for exceeding standard performance or outstanding performance then they are much more likely to work towards the goal of high achievement for the organization, especially if they are measured equally. The performance appraisal should have established standards for acceptable behavior, duties for the position, and goals to be reached (Aurnhammer, 1996). The performance appraisal is based on the job description and a form should be developed including the job essentials specific to the position being appraised (Marinucci, 2009).

Job descriptions should be reliable, valid, understandable, and specific enough to provide direction for the employee. Job descriptions should focus on what the employee does what outcomes are expected by the supervisor and the organization. These outcomes should be clearly linked to departmental objectives and needs (Lawrence). Performance appraisals should be job related and based on a thorough analysis of the job itself, standardized for all employees, and performed by supervisors who have adequate knowledge of the employee and the job being evaluated (McNamara). Identifying clear objectives and identifying key criteria that is to be evaluated or measured is essential in the performance appraisal (Arthur, 2008). Recent court decisions have emphasized the following factors which should carefully be considered when performing a performance appraisal. Performance appraisals or evaluations should be measured in relation to any preexisting standards, objectives, or other specific job requirements and performance appraisals should include identifiable criteria based on the quality or quantity of work or specific performances supported by some kind of documentation such as a job

description (Hosea). The job description for firefighter as listed in the WFD Administrative Manual page 6.21 (2005) is as follows:

This work involves participating in the protection of life and property by firefighting and rescue activities, usually under close supervision. These employees are required to operate apparatus and perform hazardous tasks under emergency conditions which may require strenuous exertion in smoke-filled and cramped surroundings. A major portion of the time is spent training and studying methods, techniques, and organization, and in the routine duties of maintaining department property and equipment. Specific orders and directions are given by the supervising officers, but the work requires initiative and a thorough understanding of fire fighting methods. Emergency care involves the administration of emergency medical aid to victims of fire, sudden health emergencies or accidental injuries. Employee is responsible for providing emergency care to sustain life in traumatic and emotional emergency situations (Wichita, 2005).

Procedures

The procedures used in this research were determined based on the identification of a problem that if corrected could benefit both the Wichita Fire Department and its employees.

The objective of the literature review, questionnaire, personal interviews, and situational analysis were to collect and establish data to answer the research questions presented.

The problem was the current WFD firefighter employee performance appraisal form does not adequately reflect specific firefighter job responsibilities. This research was completed using the action method of research with the intent of collecting pertinent data allowing the completion of a finished product for use as a revised WFD firefighter employee performance appraisal form.

In order to answer the research question of “How is the current firefighter performance appraisal perceived by WFD company officers?, a questionnaire (Appendix D) was developed by the author and was personally administered to 70 out of 112 WFD company officers during the month of July 2009. This gave a 62.5 percent participation rate. The questionnaire consisted of 10 close ended or forced choice questions. The intent of this questionnaire was to inquire the perceptions WFD company officers held concerning the current WFD performance appraisal which they are required to perform on their subordinate firefighters.

To answer the second research question “How do WFD firefighters perceive the current performance appraisal?, a questionnaire (Appendix E) was also developed by the author and administered to 77 out of 110 WFD firefighters with more than five years service. This was a 70 percent participation rate. This allowed any firefighter surveyed to have had at least five performance appraisals performed on them giving them some experience with the performance appraisal system and form, and to elicit feedback from the firefighters who are being evaluated.

To answer the third research and fourth research questions of “What if any, are the federal, state, and local requirements for a municipal employee performance evaluation system?” and “What are necessary components of an effective employee performance evaluation?” a personal interview with WFD Deputy Chief of Operations Dan L. McClure (Appendix A) was conducted by the author on June 30, 2009. Personal interviews with Lisa White (Appendix B) and Sarah Gilbert (Appendix C), of the City of Wichita Human Resources Department were conducted by the author on July 24, 2009. The author constructed interview questions that established professional qualifications along with personal and professional experience in this subject matter. A literature review was also conducted for these two research questions.

The fifth research question was “What criteria of elements of the actual City of Wichita firefighter job description do WFD company officers feel need to be included in a revised firefighter performance appraisal form? Once again the author developed a questionnaire (Appendix F) that was personally administered to the same 110 WFD company officers who participated in Appendix D questionnaire during the month of July 2009. This questionnaire sought to draw out and identify elements that WFD company officers feel need to be included in a revised firefighter performance appraisal form not currently included in the current form.

The research method was action in nature to (a) solve an existing problem and apply new methodology (in this case a revised firefighter performance appraisal form) by the WFD, (b) allow for accurate and reliable information and documentation regarding WFD employee performance, (c) assist in the professional development of WFD firefighters, and (d) to allow the WFD to meet its organizational goals and objectives more effectively.

Action research requires several separate steps:

The first step is to evaluate the problem statement. After reviewing the data of the problem and the preferred method to resolve it made the problem statement clear and comprehensive: The problem is the current WFD firefighter performance appraisal form does not adequately reflect specific job responsibilities for the position of firefighter. Action research was utilized to develop a revised WFD firefighter performance appraisal form.

The second step required establishing a broad goal. The purpose statement clearly defined the goal: The purpose of this research is to identify more specific job related criteria and use the criteria to develop a new revised firefighter performance appraisal form.

The third step was to conduct a situational analysis to determine any casual or forces likely to assist or impede reaching the goal. Existing situational forces that could assist the researcher in reaching the goal consisted of stakeholders within the organization seeking a more effective and defined job related performance appraisal form at the employee and supervisor levels. Research questions one and two sought WFD company officer and firefighter perceptions of the current firefighter performance appraisal form, while research question five sought stakeholder input regarding what criteria should be included in a revised WFD firefighter performance appraisal form. Using this information the WFD could successfully implement a revised firefighter performance appraisal form for its employees.

Impeding situational forces which exist that could keep this goal from being reached also had to be investigated. The additional training of company officers in the proper use of the revised performance appraisal form could be a barrier due to the number of supervisors requiring the training and the ability of the department to provide this training in a timely manner. Another impeding force could be the City of Wichita Human Resources Department for not accepting or

recognizing the new revised fire department firefighter performance appraisal form in order to maintain uniformity for all the other city departments.

In action research, objections must be realistic, achievable and measureable. The objectives of this research are to determine criteria needed for a revised firefighter performance appraisal form that can be used to better evaluate a firefighter's actual job performance and duties.

An action plan was developed to accomplish the previously stated objective. The action plan consists of five elements: who, what, when, where, and how. While maintaining focus of the objective, all five action plan elements were considered and a program was developed in a manageable time frame.

- Who: Internal stakeholders would be WFD company officers and firefighters and City of Wichita Human Resource Department. Residents of Wichita would also benefit from improved fire department delivery of service.
- What: Research the components of a more effective WFD firefighter appraisal form. Develop components for a revised firefighter performance appraisal form. Create a revised firefighter performance appraisal form.
- When: Develop performance appraisal form by January 1, 2010.
Create performance appraisal form by March 1, 2010.
Department approval of performance appraisal form by May 1, 2010.
Implement revised performance appraisal by June 1, 2010.

Where: Within the Wichita Fire Department internally.

How: Request to the City of Wichita Human Resource Department Director that a proposed revised firefighter performance appraisal form that includes criteria developed by research indicating a strong desire for the revised form to more closely reflect actual firefighter job performance be reviewed by the Human Resource Department. Proceed through development and legal review with City Human Resource Department approval and input. Obtain buy in from internal stakeholders through training of supervisors and education and orientation of employees on revised form and criteria with approval of Human Resource Department Director.

Limitations

Limitations regarding the research procedures included the fact that all questionnaires completed by firefighters and company officers were done so voluntarily and assumed truthfully. There were some firefighters and company officers who were qualified to participate but did not wish to participate along with some who were on extended injury leave and were not surveyed due to the fact they were not on-duty when surveys were administered. The author did not perform any advanced statistical validations or statistical reliability tests on the survey results or statistical analysis of error of margin on any of the surveys performed. The 70 percent participation rate of the firefighter questionnaire and the 62.5 percent participation rate of the company officer questionnaire may affect the validity of the results.

Results

The results of this research were compiled from literature review, personal interviews and internal employee questionnaires. The research questions and findings are listed here.

How is the current Wichita Fire Department firefighter performance appraisal form perceived by Wichita Fire Department company officers? The results from the 10 question questionnaire (Appendix E) are:

1. Do you believe that the current Firefighter performance appraisal form is accurate in evaluating the skills, knowledge, and abilities for the duties of a firefighter?

YES (10) 14.3%

NO (60) 85.7%

2. Do you believe that a more detailed and accurate performance appraisal form which includes actual firefighter job activities including skills, knowledge and abilities would assist you in performing a more objective firefighter performance appraisal?

YES (60) 85.7%

NO (10) 14.3%

3. As a company officer, do you believe the current performance appraisal form that you fill out is useful in identifying strengths of the firefighter you are evaluating?

YES (15) 21.4%

NO (55) 78.6 %

4. As a company officer, do you believe the current performance appraisal form that you fill out is useful in identifying weaknesses of the firefighter you are evaluating?

YES (15) 21.4%

NO (55) 78.6%

5. As a company officer do you believe effective and accurate performance appraisals are important in developing effective firefighters?

YES (60) 85.7% NO (10) 14.3%

6. Do you believe a more detailed and accurate performance appraisal form that included actual firefighter job activities and technical skills would improve firefighter performance? YES (50) 71.4% NO (20) 28.6%

7. Do you believe a revised performance appraisal form that includes skills, knowledge and abilities taken from the Firefighter Job Description would assist you in performing a more accurate and detailed appraisal of the firefighter?

YES (60) 85.7% NO (10) 14.3%

8. Do you believe a revised performance appraisal form that includes skills, knowledge and abilities taken from the Firefighter Job Description would assist you in performing a more objective performance appraisal for the firefighter?

YES (59) 84.3% NO (11) 15.7%

9. Have you as a supervisor, ever had any formal (classroom environment) training on how to properly perform a firefighter performance appraisal?

YES (12) 17.2% NO (58) 82.8%

10. Have you as a supervisor, ever had any formal (classroom environment) training on how to properly complete the performance appraisal form?

YES (0) NO (70) 100%

The findings of this research question indicate that over 8 out of 10 WFD company officers who participated in the questionnaire, feel that the current WFD firefighter performance appraisal form is accurate when it comes to evaluating firefighter skills and duties and would like

to see a more detailed and accurate performance appraisal form. Over three out of four WFD company officers indicated that the current WFD performance appraisal form is not useful to identify both weaknesses and strengths of firefighters that they are evaluating. An overwhelming number (84%) of WFD company officers indicated that a revised WFD firefighter performance appraisal form that included skills, abilities, and knowledge taken from the firefighter job description would in fact assist them in providing a more accurate, detailed and objective performance appraisal.

As for WFD company officers receiving any performance appraisal training, a slight number (17%) indicated that they had received aspect of formal training on how to perform a performance appraisal, however, not a single WFD company officer indicated he or she had received any formal training on how to actually complete the performance appraisal form properly. This was an unexpected finding but important in relation to the existing problem. Correct and complete supervisory training for company officers on how to properly complete and perform the performance appraisal is an essential element for an effective performance appraisal.

How do Wichita Fire Department firefighters perceive the current performance appraisal that is performed on them? The results from the 10 question questionnaire (Appendix E) are:

1. The Firefighter performance appraisal form presently used addresses my job skills as a firefighter.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(35) 45.5%	(21) 27.3 %	(21) 27.3 %

2. The current Firefighter performance appraisal is subjective when it comes to evaluating my performance as a firefighter.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(49) 63.7 %	(28) 36.3 %	0

3. The current Firefighter performance appraisal is objective when it comes to evaluating my performance as a firefighter.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(28) 36.3 %	(41) 53.3 %	(8) 10.4%

4. The current Firefighter performance appraisal promotes my professional growth and development.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(28) 36.3%	(49) 63.7%	0

5. The current Firefighter performance appraisal form clearly defines the criteria by which I am evaluated.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(41) 53.2%	(36) 46.8%	0

6. The current Firefighter performance appraisal provides me guidance for my future goals.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(7) 9.1%	(7) 9.1%	(49) 63.7%	(14) 18.2%

7. The current Firefighter performance appraisal offers a valid measurement of my performance as a Firefighter.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(7) 9.1%	(14) 18.2%	(28) 36.3%	(28) 36.3%

8. The current Firefighter performance appraisal accurately measures my technical skills and abilities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(35) 45.4%	(42) 54.6%	0

9. The current Firefighter performance appraisal accurately measures my overall work traits and habits adequately.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(42) 54.6%	(35) 45.4%	0

10. The current Firefighter performance appraisal accurately reflects my overall job performance as a firefighter.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
0	(35) 45.4%	(42) 54.6%	0

When assessing WFD firefighter perception of the current firefighter performance appraisal form, the findings indicate less than half (45%) of the WFD firefighters who participated in the questionnaire feel the current performance appraisal form addresses their job skills while well over half feel the appraisal does not promote their professional growth or give them guidance for future professional goals. Only twenty five percent feel the current performance appraisal offers a valid measurement of their performance as a firefighter which

could be the result of a majority of the firefighters indicating that the appraisal was too subjective.

While over half (54%) believe the current performance appraisal accurately measures their overall work traits and habits, and clearly defines the criteria in which they are being evaluated, less than half (45%) believe the performance appraisal accurately measures their technical skills and abilities along with their overall job performance as a firefighter.

What if any, are the federal, state, and local requirements for a municipal employee performance evaluation program? After reviewing National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards as well as other widely used texts, the author was unable to identify any national or state standard requiring fire service employee performance appraisals to be done on firefighter performance. The fact is that overall firefighter evaluation or performance appraisals, appear to be a local issue. NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, provides minimum job requirements necessary to perform the duties of a fire officer. Chapter four of this standard lists the qualifications of Fire Officer I and section 4 indicates that under human management, the fire officer has the duty to evaluate member performance when supervising personnel during emergency and non-emergency work according to their job performance requirements. Chapter five of this standard lists qualifications for Fire Officer II. Section 2 of this standard lists a required skill of evaluating the job performance of assigned members to ensure that each member's performance is evaluated accurately per human resource policies and procedures and the officer shall initiate actions to maximize member performance, or correct unacceptable performance (NFPA, 2009). Nowhere in the standard is there a requirement for a formal performance appraisal.

The state of Kansas does not operate under a state-wide civil service system so there is no state authority when it comes to municipalities requiring employee performance appraisals or evaluations. These requirements are left to local governments or municipalities rules and regulations (Lisa White, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

As for local requirements, there are no local ordinances or legal requirements for a municipality to conduct performance appraisals on its employees. Most do in order to follow good human resource practices and to prevent possible employment litigation according to Sarah Gilbert (personal communication, July 24, 2009).

What are necessary components of an effective employee performance appraisal? A literature review and personal interviews resulted in identifying several components felt to be necessary for an effective employee performance appraisal. The first and foremost was that the performance appraisal should be based off of the actual job description for the position being evaluated. The performance appraisal should focus on the primary job performance standards (Graner, 2006). The performance standards have to be realistic in order to be evaluated by supervisors objectively and not subjectively (IPMA, 2002). The purpose of the performance appraisal is to measure or evaluate firefighter's work skills and traits and there must be a basic starting point of performance in order to measure. The job description is the logical first place to begin. The criteria listed on the performance appraisal forms are much more effective when they are used to compare responsibilities identified by the job description and the identification of key criteria to be measured is essential to the performance appraisal (Arthur, 2008). The ICMA (1997) identifies some characteristics of effective performance appraisals which include: job descriptions are updated regularly, employees are made aware of the standards they are being measured against, performance goals or standards are communicated to the employee prior to the

evaluation and supervisors should be properly trained on how to conduct the performance appraisal. Sarah Gilbert (personal communication, July 24, 2009) says that effective performance appraisals should reflect that the job duties are consistent with the position job description.

Feedback from supervisors improves both organization and employee effectiveness (Stowell, 2004). Lisa White (personal communication, July 24, 2009) maintains that employee feedback is the primary objective of an employee performance appraisal in that it enables the employee to be aware of their performance. While Sarah Gilbert (personal communication, July 24, 2009) describes feedback as an important aspect to the employee's professional development. Bacal (2004) says that timely performance feedback to the employee is essential for the appraisal to be effective while Grote (2004) agrees that positive feedback from supervisor to employee promotes a continued desire by employee to exceed performance standards.

Simplicity of the process of performance appraisal process was also identified as an effective component by both Buckman and the ICMA (1997) who agreed that the appraisal form should be simple, easy to administer by supervisors and consistent. Deputy Chief Dan McClure (personal communication, June 30, 2009) agrees that a more simplified form would give more detailed, effective and better overall view of actual firefighter abilities while also being easier for the supervisors to complete.

In summary, the results to this question indicated that properly updated job description, communication of performance expectations or standards, feedback from supervisors, supervisor training of how to properly conduct employee performance appraisals and a simple performance appraisal form are all components to an effective performance appraisal.

What criteria or elements of the firefighter job description do Wichita Fire Department company officers feel need to be included in a revised WFD firefighter performance appraisal form? The results from questionnaire administered to WFD company officers (Appendix F) are:

Table 1

Very Essential	Non-Essential	Percentage Essential	Performance Traits
70	0	100 %	Quality of work during firefighting activities
70	0	100 %	Quality of work during emergency care activities
70	0	100%	Quality of work at Emergency Scenes
70	0	100%	Work Attitude
70	0	100%	Follows Instructions
58	12	82.8%	Meeting Daily Job Requirements
55	15	78.5%	Punctuality/Attendance
53	17	75.7%	Dependability
50	20	71.4%	Knowledge of Department Policies and Procedures
50	20	71.4%	Work Habits
48	22	68.5%	Judgement
42	28	60.0%	Initiative
35	35	50.0%	Self-Improvement
30	40	42.8%	Flexibility
24	46	34.2%	Communication Skills
23	47	32.8%	Quality of Work-Station
22	48	31.4%	Interpersonal Skills
20	50	28.5%	Customer Service Skills
20	50	28.5%	Appearance

The findings (Table 1) showed that the WFD company officers felt actual firefighting activities along with job responsibilities need to be included in a revised WFD firefighter performance appraisal form. The WFD company officers who participated in the survey unanimously indicated that quality of work during firefighting and emergency care activities along with work attitude and following instructions were selected as very essential and deemed important criteria for a revised performance appraisal form. The meeting of daily job requirements, dependability, knowledge of department policies and procedures and work habits

were also selected by more than 70% of the company officers as criteria they feel need to be on a revised form.

Less than 50 % of respondents selected self improvement, flexibility, communication skills, quality of work at the station and interpersonal skills, while less than 30% selected customer service and appearance as being very essential in the evaluation of a firefighter.

Based upon the results of all research questions presented, the author developed a revised firefighter performance appraisal form (Appendix G) for the WFD that incorporated the elements and components identified by this research.

Discussion

The study results indicated that there are several commonalities that can make an employee performance appraisal more effective. Areas such as the incorporation of job descriptions were confirmed by Falcone (2007), While Arthur (2008) argued that the job description is essential when comparing the employee's actual performance and that a job description included in a performance appraisal should be clear and understandable by the employee. Survey results from WFD firefighter and company officer questionnaires strongly indicate that both would like to see actual job description elements be included in a revised firefighter performance appraisal form. Establishing performance standards that reflect actual job requirements are key to a legally sound performance appraisal according to Bernardin and Beatty (1984). This also clarifies the employer and supervisor's expectations and standards for the employee (Sarah Gilbert, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

An important benefit from any performance evaluation is the communication required between the supervisor and employee that often results in feedback between the two. Guerra-Lopez (2008) insists that this feedback is the ultimate objective of a performance appraisal. The

study did identify this to be an effective element of a performance appraisal. However the author agrees with the WFD firefighter survey results that firefighters are not receiving adequate feedback regarding professional goals and employee development.

The study results regarding local, state and federal requirements concerning employee performance appraisals were consistent with those found in the literature review and personal interviews. The most recent NFPA standards confirm there are no federal requirements for firefighter performance appraisals and personal interviews revealed there are no legal mandates for state or local municipalities concerning employee performance appraisals (Sarah Gilbert, personal communication, July 24, 2009) but rather employee performance appraisals are a local government or organization requirement. The City of Wichita Human Resource Department requires annual performance appraisals on all of its employees (Lisa White, personal communication, July 24, 2009). The WFD complies with this requirement by conducting employee performance appraisal on all of its firefighters annually (Dan McClure, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

There appears to be a general feeling among WFD firefighters and company officers that the firefighter performance appraisal form currently in use is inadequate and ineffective. Many WFD company officers find it difficult to document many of the actual firefighter's duties and responsibilities with the current performance appraisal form. Graner (2006) says an employee performance should focus on primary job performance standards or duties while McNamara claims that performance appraisals should be job related.

One glaring observation based from the study results is that none of the WFD company officers are receiving any formal training from the fire department or the human resource department on how to perform a performance appraisal properly or how to complete the

appraisal form properly. The author's recommendations address this issue and the topic of supervisor training could be address with further research and continually refreshed and updated.

A workforce that is well trained and prepared to face any emergency that may occur is paramount to the WFD's mission. A workforce that can operate and perform in a safe and effective manner while meeting professional standards is a much more efficient workforce. Due to the fact that nearly one of every three WFD firefighters currently has less than five years experience allows for a revised firefighter performance appraisal form to contribute to the culture change that the WFD is currently experiencing. Never has the performance appraisal process been more valuable and important to this organization as now due to the shear number or relatively inexperienced firefighters that exist within its ranks.

By revising the firefighter performance appraisal form and utilizing it correctly, this organization and its employees have an opportunity to grow together thus creating a improved culture of professional employee development while also continuing to improve the level of professional fire service to the citizens of Wichita. Effective employee evaluation will help continue to improve organizational performance, clearly define employee responsibilities, eliminate misunderstandings concerning job duties, assist in individual employee development and provide a written documentation for future reference that will greatly assist the firefighter and company officer in carrying out their respective duties.

The author agrees with the literature review which indicated that the main objective of an employee performance appraisal should be to improve employee performance and encourage employee development. By establishing future employee goals and continuing to determine and measure the employee's progress towards achieving these goals, the likelihood of success is greatly increased. Many of the elements that the WFD firefighters and company officers felt

should be included in a revised firefighter performance appraisal form were consistent with those elements found to be important during this research.

Recommendations

As a result of the internal questionnaires, literature review and personal interviews for this project, it is recommended that the Wichita Fire Department could benefit from a revised firefighter performance appraisal form and should begin the process of developing, creating, and implementing a revised WFD Firefighter Performance Appraisal Form. As part of this action research, a revised firefighter performance appraisal form (Appendix G) was developed that meets the needs identified. While the appraisal format remained somewhat uniform with the other city department appraisals, the criteria identified in this research was added in a logical and effective order. The research indicated that the following recommendations be made:

- A peer review team consisting of WFD firefighters and company officers should be identified as stakeholders and selected by the Fire Chief to participate in this review process. The firefighters selected should be of various experience levels. This peer review team shall be chaired by WFD Chief of Training and consist of following personnel: 6 WFD firefighters, 3 WFD company officers and 2 members selected by the president of the IAFF Local 135 (Wichita Fire Department's Local IAFF unit).
- The peer review team shall have 60 days under the chairmanship of the Chief of Training to review, dispute, investigate and further develop if needed, any previously unidentified criteria to be included on a revised firefighter performance appraisal form.
- The review team should maintain the following broad goals while completing this project:
 1. The team should consider identifying clear goals and objectives to be included in the revised appraisal form.
 2. The revised form must remain same type and format in order to

continue uniformity for all departments city-wide. Only changes should be content.

3. The form shall be simple for supervisors to use and inclusive of job description based firefighter skills and abilities.
 4. The form shall to remain in electronic format.
 5. Inclusion of any NFPA Standards, WFD performance standards, or WFD firefighter job description shall be considered and included if deemed appropriate by peer team.
 6. The revised form should also provide and maintain employee/supervisor communication and goal setting areas.
- Upon completion of peer team's review, the final agreed upon elements or criteria should be selected for inclusion into a DRAFT revised performance appraisal form.
 - WFD Deputy Chief of Operations should then review the DRAFT form for approval and upon approval then the WFD Deputy Chief of Operations and WFD Chief of Training should request to meet with the Fire Department's Human Resource personnel technician and the Human Resource Department Director.
 - Deputy Chief of Operations and Chief of Training should then present the DRAFT form to Human Resource Department for review, any revision, or any legal review needed from the Human Resource Department.
 - Upon approval of Human Resource Department of the DRAFT form into becoming the actual Firefighter Performance Appraisal form, the Chief of Training will then schedule all WFD firefighters for performance appraisal awareness training to acquaint employees of the standards and expectations of the revised Firefighter Performance Appraisal form

and define the performance standards necessary to warrant each rating category identified within the revised form.

- This training will take approximately 30 days to completely have all firefighters go through the training. The training would be done jointly by WFD Training officers and City of Wichita Human Resource instructors. There would be no cost to WFD in that this training could be teamed with an existing previously schedule company drill cycle.
- Upon completion of the training of WFD firefighters in regards to the revised Firefighter Performance Appraisal Form, Chief of Training should then schedule a mandatory training session for all company officers and chief officers on how to properly perform and complete the firefighter performance appraisal form. This training could be accomplished in less than 30 days. The same instructors would perform the training and there would again be no cost due to the fact that it was done within the fire department by fire department and city training staff.
- Once all WFD firefighters and company officers have received training then the revised Firefighter Performance Appraisal form will be implemented into both the Fire Department's administrative system and the City of Wichita Human Resource's administrative system.
- Entire timeline for process would be no more than 120 days.
- WFD firefighter job description should then be reviewed and updated to accommodate the revised appraisal form if there are any discrepancies.
- Finally, continuing performance appraisal training sessions should occur for newly promoted company officers on a regular basis.

Upon approval of new Firefighter Performance Appraisal form, future readers could assist in further development of this topic by conducting additional study and research of supervisory performance appraisal training and also of identification of specific department performance standards to be measured or added to the form in the future.

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Appendix A
Personal interview with Chief Dan McClure

Name: Dan McClure
Position: Deputy Chief of Operations
Date: June 30th, 2009
Time: 1300 hours

1. How long have you been with the City of Wichita? ***30 years.***
2. What is your current position and what other positions have you held with the City of Wichita? ***I have been a Firefighter, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain, Battalion Chief, Division Chief, and Deputy Chief of Operations.***
3. Are performance appraisals currently required by the Wichita Fire Department? ***Yes they are done on an annual basis for every employee within the department.***
4. Is the same employee performance appraisal form used for all Wichita Fire Department employees? ***Yes. The form is consistent throughout the entire department for all non-exempt employees including firefighters and company officers up to the level of Battalion Chief and above.***
5. Who is responsible for filling out the employee performance appraisal on the employee? ***The employee's immediate supervisor.***
6. What types of criteria are currently evaluated on the firefighter performance appraisal? ***I believe such areas of flexibility, quality of work, initiative, dependability, interpersonal skills, work habits, quantity of work, and judgment are included in the current performance appraisal.***
7. Is the criteria currently used by the performance appraisal tied to the job description of firefighter? And if so how closely tied? ***Currently the criteria being used in the performance appraisal is rather broadly part of the job description of firefighter. It is not specific in detail regarding certain job functions of a firefighter or certain skills of performing firefighter duties.***
8. How is Wichita Fire Department firefighter performance currently being measured? ***By the City's Human Resource Performance Appraisal system currently in use.***
9. After the Wichita Fire Department employee performance appraisal is completed on a firefighter, what happens to the form? ***The performance appraisal is completed by the firefighter's immediate supervisor and then sent to the respective employee's Battalion Chief for review. The Battalion Chief then sends it to the Division Chief for review after which it goes to the Deputy Chief of Operations and finally to the Fire Chief for review.***

10. How is the performance appraisal presented to the employee? *After the employee's immediate supervisor completes the performance appraisal, it is then shared with the employee for review and employee feedback and approval. The employee must sign the appraisal form before it goes to his or her Battalion Chief.*
11. Are Wichita Fire Department supervisors formally trained to perform performance appraisals for firefighters properly? *To my knowledge there is no such training for supervisors to be trained properly on the performance appraisal forms.*
12. Based on your professional opinion, what do you believe is the goal or objective of an employee performance appraisal? *I believe that the performance appraisal is a tool that can be used to measure and document firefighter weaknesses and or strengths, identify training needs, document substandard behavior, to inform the employee of areas of need for improvement, and to make sure that employee's are performing tasks necessary to meet the organization's goals and objectives.*
13. Based on your professional experience, what would you desire in an employee performance appraisal form that is currently not being done? *I feel the current system takes entirely too much time to review and understand. I would prefer a more simple form that perhaps could be more of a checkbox type format or something that gives a more detailed, concise picture of the actual abilities of a firefighter during any given appraisal period. The form could perhaps be 90 to 95 percent checkbox type answers that a supervisor could more easily fill out. It would also be nice to have an appraisal that is more tied to the department's priorities and job descriptions.*

Appendix B
Personal Interview with Lisa White

Name: *Lisa White*
Position: *Senior Human Resources Specialist*
Date: *7/24/09*
Time: *8:30 am*

How long have you been with the City of Wichita?
I began my career with the City of Wichita eight years ago in July 2001.

What is your current position and what other positions have you held with the City of Wichita? *I am currently a Senior Human Resources Specialist. My primary duties are related to recruiting and employment. Prior to my current position, I was an Associate HR Specialist functioning primarily as the Family and Medical Leave Administrator.*

Are performance appraisals currently required by the WFD? *Yes. WFD participates in the City of Wichita performance appraisal system.*

What does HR require in a employee performance appraisal? *An employee is rated by his/her supervisor in several categories, such as: Flexibility, Quality of Work, Initiative, Dependability, Job Knowledge & Skills, Quantity of Work, Interpersonal Skills, Work Habits, and Judgment.*

Are there any legal requirements for having a employee performance appraisal? And if so are they federal? State? Or local? *I am not aware of any law requiring an employer to provide a performance appraisal to an employee at the federal, state or local level.*

What is the purpose or purposes of an employee performance appraisal? *The purpose is to provide feedback to the employee from the supervisor regarding his/her job performance and to document progress of the employee.*

What is the process when the HR department receives a performance appraisal from the WFD? *The appraisal is reviewed by HR staff. If a merit increase has been approved, the pay information is entered into the HR payroll system by HR Payroll staff.*

Are supervisors required to be trained on how to properly perform employee performance appraisals? And if so how often are they trained and by whom? *Each semester, supervisory development training courses, which typically include information on the performance appraisal process, are offered through Human Resources, City University. Attendance is*

voluntary. Also, one-on-one assistance is available by contacting Human Resources staff at any time. There is no requirement by the City for this training. It is strictly voluntary.

Appendix C
Personal Interview with Sarah Gilbert

Name: *Sarah Gilbert*

Position: *Human Resources Director*

Date: *July 24, 2009*

Time: *0930 hours*

Location: *Human Resources Office*

1. How long have you been with the City of Wichita?

32 years

2. What is your current position and what other positions have you held with the City of Wichita?

***Human Resources Director, Career Development Coordinator
Citizen Participation Organization Aide, Assistant Manager, then Manager.***

3. Are performance appraisals currently required by the Wichita Fire Department? ***Yes***

4. Why does Human Resources require a employee performance appraisal?

PA's are a management tool for supervisors, providing a formal method to track an employee's performance, behavior, and development. They also document performance problems, consistent with the discipline process.

5. Are there any legal requirements for a municipality for having a employee performance appraisal? And if so are they federal? State? Or local? ***No there are no legal requirements at the federal, state or local level.***

6. What are the benefits of an employee performance appraisal to the employee?

The PA clarifies the City's, department's, and supervisor's expectations and standards for the employee. Employees should know when they are doing a good job.

7. What are the benefits of an employee performance appraisal to the organization?

Also, the PA is often used to respond to complaints, grievances and lawsuits to show a supervisor's attention to employee performance and behavior.

8. What is the process when the Human Resource Department receives a performance appraisal from the Wichita Fire Department? ***HR checks all PA to make sure they contain only legally permissible information; i.e. no reference to FMLA or sick leave.***

9. Are supervisors required to be trained on how to properly perform employee performance appraisals? And if so how often are they trained and by whom? ***The training is strongly recommended, but not required at this time. Training is available through the City University. HR will also customize training for specific departments, upon request.***

10. In your professional opinion what are some of the elements of an effective performance appraisal? ***List of job duties consistent with the position job description. Employee opportunity***

for self-appraisal. Supervisor comments based on notes and documentation throughout the appraisal year. Honest ratings based on standards of performance and behavior. Reference to discipline during the year, either as issues resolved or still pending .A plan to address issues still pending. A plan for the employee's continued development. Time for discussion. Quarterly follow-up. And feedback to the employee are extremely effective in the employee's development.

Appendix D
WFD Company Officer Questionnaire #1

Instructions: Please answer the following 10 questions as truthfully as possible regarding Firefighter Performance Appraisals and the Appraisal form.

Years of service _____

1. Do you believe that the current Firefighter performance appraisal form is accurate in evaluating the skills, knowledge, and abilities for the duties of a firefighter? YES NO
2. Do you believe that a more detailed and accurate performance appraisal form that included actual firefighter job activities including skills, knowledge and abilities would assist you in performing a more objective firefighter performance appraisal? YES NO
3. As a company officer, do you believe the current performance appraisal form that you fill out is useful in identifying strengths of the firefighter you are evaluating? YES NO
4. As a company officer, do you believe the current performance appraisal form that you fill out is useful in identifying weaknesses of the firefighter you are evaluating? YES NO
5. As a company officer do you believe effective and accurate performance appraisals are important in developing effective firefighters? YES NO
6. Do you believe a more detailed and accurate performance appraisal form that included actual firefighter job activities and technical skills would improve firefighter performance? YES NO
7. Do you believe a revised performance appraisal form that includes skills, knowledge and abilities taken from the Firefighter Job Description would assist you in performing a more accurate and detailed appraisal of the firefighter? YES NO
8. Do you believe a revised performance appraisal form that includes skills, knowledge and abilities taken from the Firefighter Job Description would assist you in performing a more objective performance appraisal for the firefighter? YES NO
9. Have you as a supervisor, ever had any formal (classroom environment) training or instruction on how to perform a firefighter performance appraisal? YES NO
10. Have you as a supervisor, ever had any formal (classroom environment) training or instruction on how to properly complete the current firefighter performance appraisal form? YES NO

Appendix E
WFD Firefighter Questionnaire

Instructions: Please fill out the following questionnaire by circling your most honest answer and return.
Years of service _____

1. The Firefighter performance appraisal form presently used addresses my job skills as a firefighter.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. The current Firefighter performance appraisal is subjective when it comes to evaluating my performance as a firefighter.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
3. The current Firefighter performance appraisal is objective when it comes to evaluating my performance as a firefighter.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. The current Firefighter performance appraisal promotes my professional growth and development.
5. Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. The current Firefighter performance appraisal form clearly defines the criteria by which I am evaluated.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. The current Firefighter performance appraisal provides me guidance for my future goals.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. The current Firefighter performance appraisal offers a valid measurement of my performance as a Firefighter.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. Do you believe the current Firefighter performance appraisal accurately measures my technical skills and abilities.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. The current Firefighter performance appraisal accurately measures my overall work traits and habits adequately.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
11. The current Firefighter performance appraisal accurately reflects my overall job performance as a firefighter.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix F
WFD Company Officer Questionnaire #2

Instructions: Please fill out questionnaire below and submit.

Based on your experience as a company officer please rank the following traits and criteria that you feel to be important aspects of the Firefighter position here on the Wichita Fire Department, and that as a supervisor you feel need to be part of the performance appraisal form.

Please mark accordingly E=Essential for Firefighter Evaluation
or
NE= Non Essential for Firefighter Evaluation

_____Appearance	_____Work Habits
_____Follows Instructions	_____Judgment
_____Meeting Daily Job Requirements	_____Punctuality/Attendance
_____Self Improvement	_____Initiative
_____Work attitude	_____Flexibility
_____Quality of work-Emergency scene	_____Dependability
_____Quality of work-Station	_____Interpersonal Skills
_____Quality of work during firefighting activities	_____Customer Service Skill
_____Quality of work during emergency medical activities	
_____Knowledge of Department policies and procedures	_____Communication Skills

Appendix G
Revised Firefighter Performance Appraisal Form



Non-exempt Performance Appraisal Report
(To be completed by the supervisor prior to meeting with the employee)

Section I

Name: _____ **Last four digits of Social Security Number:** _____

Department: _____ **Division:** _____ **Position:** _____

This form is to be completed and returned to Human Resources no later than _____

Probation Period Ends: _____ **Merit Consideration Date:** _____

A. List all major duties and responsibilities performed by the employee. (If applicable, E.E.O. compliance efforts should be included as one of the employee's major duties and responsibilities.)

B. Rate the employee's performance of each duty and responsibility using the following scale:

O – Outstanding	Exemplary performance far exceeding performance criteria.
E – Exceeds Expectations	Performance exceeds the level supervisor expects.
M – Meets Expectations	Generally meets supervisor's expectation on performance criteria.
B – Below Expectations	Erratic performance, falling short of that normally expected; requires remedial attention
U – Unsatisfactory	Unacceptable performance that must receive immediate attention.

	O	E	M	B	U
Work Traits:					
Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work Attitude					
During Emergency Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During Non-Emergency Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Towards public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of Department Policies and Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands instructions and directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to work well as a team member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical Skills:					
Knowledge of Apparatus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of tools and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to use tools and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to use tools and equipment in safe and proper manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to perform basic emergency medical care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeks new assignments and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance during routine station duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adherence to safety policies and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The final overall rating should reflect the majority of ratings given for the major job duties and the nine performance factors. However, the overall rating can be lower than the majority of ratings if there is a deficiency in one or more of the performance factors that adversely affects overall job performance. Rate employees overall performance using the following scale.

O – Outstanding	Exemplary performance far exceeding performance criteria.
E – Exceeds Expectations	Performance exceeds the level supervisor expects.
M – Meets Expectations	Generally meets supervisor’s expectation on performance criteria.
B – Below Expectations	Erratic performance, falling short of that normally expected; requires remedial attention
U – Unsatisfactory	Unacceptable performance that must receive immediate attention.

OVERALL RATING: _____

A. Indicate below specific examples of performance strengths. Include additional responsibilities the employee has assumed since the last evaluation or will undertake within the next rating period.

B. Indicate below specific examples of performance weaknesses.

Section II

(to be completed by the supervisor and employee together during the performance appraisal discussion)

REMEDIAL ACTIVITIES: Actions which supervisor and employee have agreed upon to correct performance weaknesses.

Page 2

DEVELOPMENTAL and TRAINING ACTIVITIES: Actions which supervisor and employee have agreed upon to further develop employee's capabilities and to prepare for greater responsibility.

COMMENTS/REACTIONS OF EMPLOYEE: (To be completed by employee only.)

Do not sign this form until all sections are completed. Signatures denote this appraisal has been discussed with the employee. Employee's signature does not indicate agreement with the appraisal.

<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Employee's Signature	Date	Supervisor's Signature	Date
 <hr/>	 <hr/>	 <hr/>	 <hr/>
Division Director	Date	Department Director	Date